



Captured in paint and ink

Chambers Fine Art Beijing is proving that serious exhibitions don't belong in 798 Art Zone.

The Caochangdi-based gallery is hosting an amazing exhibition of Chinese calligraphy by scholar Zheng Shengtian and calligrapher Wang Dongling, whose works drags Chinese classical improvisation into the new century.

From September, it will display the paintings of Xiaozhe Xie, a Chinese American and Stanford University professor known for his obsession with media consumption. Xie's latest exhibition includes works inspired as much by newspapers as by Sina Weibo.



Film festival gives glimpse into Chile

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Foreign team out to save the dialects

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Shop offers furniture in art form

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Try Ganbei chef's Kansai creations

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Foreign tourism declines as domestic skyrockets

By Zhao Hongyi

The number of foreign tourists to Beijing fell 7.1 percent to 2.14 million during the first half of the year.

At last weekend's 2013 Beijing Tourism Working Meeting, Director of Municipal Tourism Development Committee Lu Yong blamed the decline on global economic slowdown, yuan appreciation and increasingly severe pollution.

"Worldwide depression has hammered down the number of tourists from Europe and North America, and tourists from Japan fell 54.5 percent over the same period last year," Lu Yong said.

This is not the first time Beijing has seen a crash in foreign tourism. Similar drops were recorded in 1989, 1998, 2003 and 2008.

Yuan appreciation is being blamed for a decline in tourism nationwide.



Pollution and economic troubles have made foreign tourists a rare sight this summer.

CFP Photo

Over the past decade, the exchange rate has risen from 8.25 yuan per US \$1 to 6.15

yuan. The shift has been devastating to many hotels and tourist sites.

Thick toxic clouds, widely reported in both Chinese and foreign media, have also

deterred foreigners from exploring the Chinese capital.

"We received only five groups of foreign tourists in the first half of this year," said Xu Jianhua, an agent at Sunshine Travel Agency: last year, the company received more than 50 groups in the same period.

But domestic tourism is booming. The number of domestic tourists to Beijing broke 100 million in the first half of the year, a 7.2 percent increase since last year.

"The domestic tour groups are noisy and unruly. They are extremely difficult to manage," Xu said.

To stimulate inbound foreign tourism, Beijing has opened the city to 72-hour visa free stays for passengers who are passing through China on their way to a third country.

The government is constructing a second international airport on the south.

Beijing to stem coal use, fight air pollution



In addition to using dirty coal, farmers burn leftover vegetation in their fields causing severe pollution downtown.

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

The municipal government announced it would reduce its use of poor quality coal by 800,000 tons in rural districts this winter.

It hopes to promote the use of higher quality coal and solar power.

Rural Beijing accounts for a fifth of the capital's total coal use, consuming 4.3 million tons each year.

The government hopes to slash its use in Mengtougou, Yanqing and Shunyi. Other rural districts must reduce their dirty coal use by 20 percent.

Aside from forceful prevention,

the city government will subsidize 200 yuan of each ton of quality coal purchased, and 25 yuan for each 15 kilograms of natural gas.

Coal power is one of the four main contributors to severe pollution in the capital's downtown districts. Other sources are vehicular exhaust, construction dust and industrial discharge, which account for about 22, 17 and 16 percent of the pollution respectively.

Beijing has battled pollution for many years, but the last decade has seen a surge in toxicity.

Thirty years ago the main problem

was sandstorms, which blew through the city each spring and winter. The city government slowed the problem by aggressive tree planting along the capital's northwest border.

But economic development has brought intense industrial pollution.

Ten years ago, the city relocated most of its industrial factories, such as Shijingshan Capital Iron and Steel Factory in the west and the Coal Processing Factory in the east.

The government has pledged to continue to take more measures to reduce the air pollution in the coming years.

City opens infrastructure to private investment

By Zhao Hongyi

The city government is opening many of Beijing's key infrastructures to private and foreign investment.

The Beijing Development and Reform Commission announced six categories of 126 investment projects that were open to investment at the 5th Invest in Beijing Forum held earlier this month.

About 38 percent of the necessary funds, or 130 billion yuan, are open to foreign and private investors.

The first 27 projects are seeking 24 billion yuan. Yang Xuhui, a member of the commission, said investors must guarantee a minimum capital investment of 30 million yuan.

These projects include rail management, urban roads, comprehensive transportation hubs, sewage treatment, garbage disposal and heating.

Rail transportation projects include the newly scheduled subway Lines 16, 6 and 14. Urban roads include the second phase of National Highway 110 and the new airport expressway in southern Daxing District. The transportation hub project is centered on Pingguoyuan at the western public end of Line 1.

The largest project is the construction of subway Line 16, which requires 44 billion yuan, of which 24 billion can come from private investment.

At the forum, a number of

flagship enterprises signed letters of intent with the municipal government, including Beijing MTR Corp, a joint venture of Beijing Subway and Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Corporation from Hong Kong.

Beijing MTR operates subway Line 4 and is contracted to operate it for the next 30 years.

Another private company interested in the projects is Sound Group from Wuxi, Jiangsu Province. The group is focused on sewage treatment, garbage disposal, renewable resources and new energies.

Private investment accounts for only 30 percent of the total investment in the

capital. More than 90 percent is concentrated in real estate, manufacturing, information services and logistics.

Private investment in urban infrastructure is currently almost non-existent.

The new projects will be categorized into business types, licensed business types and non-business types.

Gas, electric and non-basic public services will be completely open to the market.

Rail transportation, toll roads, heating, sewage treatment and garbage disposal will be licensed businesses. The government will adopt formulas such as public private partnership to allow private investment.

For basic public services, such as water treatment, ordinary roads, urban roads and transportation hubs, the government will adopt long term plants to buy back services and allow private investors to profit.

Sources from the municipal government said the minimum profits are expected to be 8 percent.

Beijing MTR joint venture is one of the first successful examples.

Since subway Line 4 opened in 2009, the municipal government locked its ticket fee at 2 yuan and gave the line a 640 million yuan subsidy in 2010. The joint venture has been able to run a profit.

Foreign team's crowd-funded site may save China's speech

By Zhao Hongyi

Although China's writing system was mostly standardized during the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), wildly different spoken dialects persist to this day.

The most recent survey by the central government found that there are more than 800 dialects of spoken Chinese. Standardized education has left many of them at risk.

Two Americans are leading a project to record samples of the dialects for posterity – an immense undertaking that has been largely ignored by local governments.

Obsessed with words

Steve Hansen came to Beijing in 2007 after being transferred by his US employer.

When his contract ended, he left the company but remained in Beijing to teach MBA courses at Peking University's Guanghua School of Management.

Since then he has operated a "Beijing Sounds" blog where he records his investigations into the dialects of rural Beijing.

The blog helped him to find Kellen Parker, another expat covering Shanghai's dialects, in 2009. The two teamed up to create Sinoglot, a network of blogs about China's more exotic dialects and characters.

"We did not know how to start [collecting dialects] at the very beginning," Parker said.

They planned to ask natives to read a paragraph of text in their own dialect, "but found it was impossible, because native speakers used different phrases and words," Hansen said.

Over the next three years they refined their system, and in May 2012 founded Phonemica, a database of Chinese dialects and the stories of their speakers.

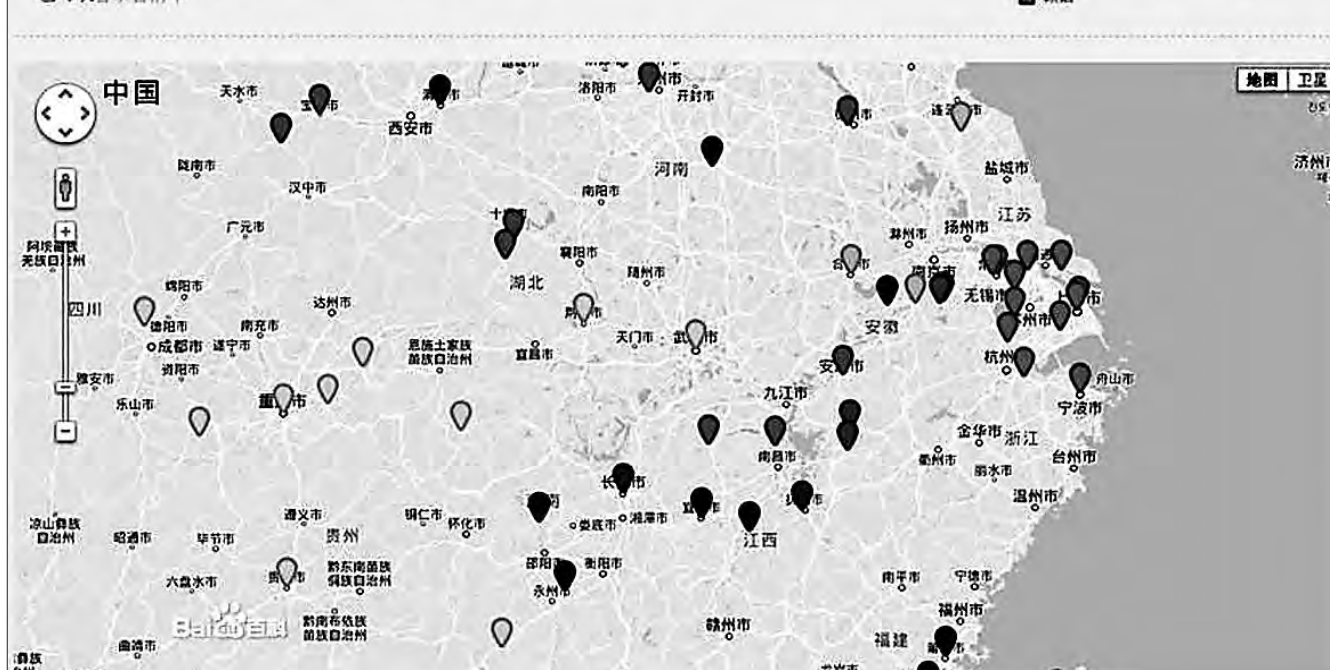
The site went live this April with 45 recordings ranging from 15 seconds to 15 minutes. Since its successful crowd funding operation that raised \$4,300 on Indiegogo, it has grown to include 237 recordings and more than 6,000 registered users.

Most of the recordings are dialects from the coastal regions. For instance, Hansen recorded a story told by a man surnamed Xie, a 61-year-old speaker of the Sixian Hakka dialect in Fujian Province.

"There is almost no one can speak the Sixian Haka even though there are as many as 30

说者地图

每个图钉代表一位发言者在我们的数据库中。点击图钉听故事。也可以看录音清单



Parker and Hansen's map of Chinese dialects



Kellen Parker



Steve Hansen

million Hakka speakers worldwide," Hansen said.

Another sample is a recording of the 50-year-old Zhu Hongcheng from Fangxian, Hubei Province.

"The Fangxian dialect used to be a branch of the official

dialect of the central plains," he said. "Today, there are only about 300,000 Fangxian speakers."

Hansen said the site is expanding to include more dialects from the interior, as well as overseas Chinese speakers in

Singapore and Mongolia.

Future hope

"Many people don't understand why we are creating this kind of database," Hansen said. "It doesn't make any money, and most of the dialects are dying."

Many of the first recordings were provided by his students, who come from across the country.

The website has only one sample of Beijing dialect, which sounds more like a sample of standard Chinese than a dialect.

"People tell me that even in Beijing there are dozens of dialects. Residents of northern Beijing speak differently from those on the south side, or in the east or west," Hansen said.

He said he really wants more Beijingers to participate in the project to preserve their own dialects.

"Parker and I created the platform. How it grows depends on the efforts of more people," he said.

"To push the website ahead we will need more money," he said. "We would welcome any companies – local or foreign – to partner with us."

Tandem project

Chinese visitors moan that dialects are doomed and their preservation is useless. Due to the nationalization of media and education, few Chinese speakers remain isolated in their own villages

and counties.

But a record of past dialects has other uses, as it can be used to reconstruction population movement and record cultural diversity.

Even the government recognizes the importance of preservation.

The National Language Research Committee, an agency under the Ministry of Education, has been charged with compiling a record of Chinese dialects for more than a decade. Most of its collection is divided by province.

Jiangsu, Guangxi and Shanghai are among the only participants. The three have produced an impressive collection of more than 106 hours of voice samples.

However, none of the province have put their collections online citing "state secrecy."

"More provinces will get involved in the coming years," said a committee official who refused to disclose his name.

When asked about Phonemica, he said he had heard about the website and appreciated its effort.

"I hope they continue to expand their content," he said. "We encourage their work and look forward to the growth of their collection."

On the Web:

Phonemica:

phonemica.net

Sinoglot: sinoglot.com

Beijing Sounds:

beijingsounds.com

Vanishing words c in paint and ink

By Annie We
Art buyers
This week
influential sch



Artist Xiaoze Xie

Multiple Perspectives: A story of changing media in changing times

Unlike many artists whose work is exhibited by Chambers Fine Art Beijing, Xiaoze Xie began his career abroad.

Xie is a Chinese American visual artist and a professor of art and art history at Stanford University.

His work shows an obsession with antique tomes and used newspapers. The paintings of stacked papers and tattered pages allude to past headlines and show torn images of historic moments.

The upcoming exhibition augments this collection with recreations of heated events discussed on new media sources such as Sina Weibo. His exhibited paintings showcase the ways in which people have consumed media throughout the ages.

Like many gifted male artists, Xie likes his works to reflect what is happening in modern society.

His latest paintings recreate social events that have provoked public outrage, such as a string of news reports about school principals and teachers sexually assaulting their under-age girl students.

Netizens responded with their usual bitter humor: many women posed for photos with signs asking the men to assault them instead.

Xie said humor is often the public's only coping mechanism for anger and disappointment with a police force that is reluctant to supervise officials or take action to prevent such assaults.

"Grassroots democracy is a major characteristic of modern Chinese society," Xie said. "The average people can and should have a voice, but their voice is usually quickly forgotten."

Other paintings include *Dingzihu*, the Chinese word for residents who refuse to abandon their homes when the government sells their land to real estate developers — a growing phenomenon since it was first reported in Chongqing in 2007.

"When stripped naked, the modern reality is one of powerlessness and disappointment," Xie said.

The exhibition includes photos of how Xie creates his work, including the sources of inspiration for many of his stacked papers.

Xie's paintings will be exhibited from September 7 to October 20.



Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

"Guan Shan Gathering"

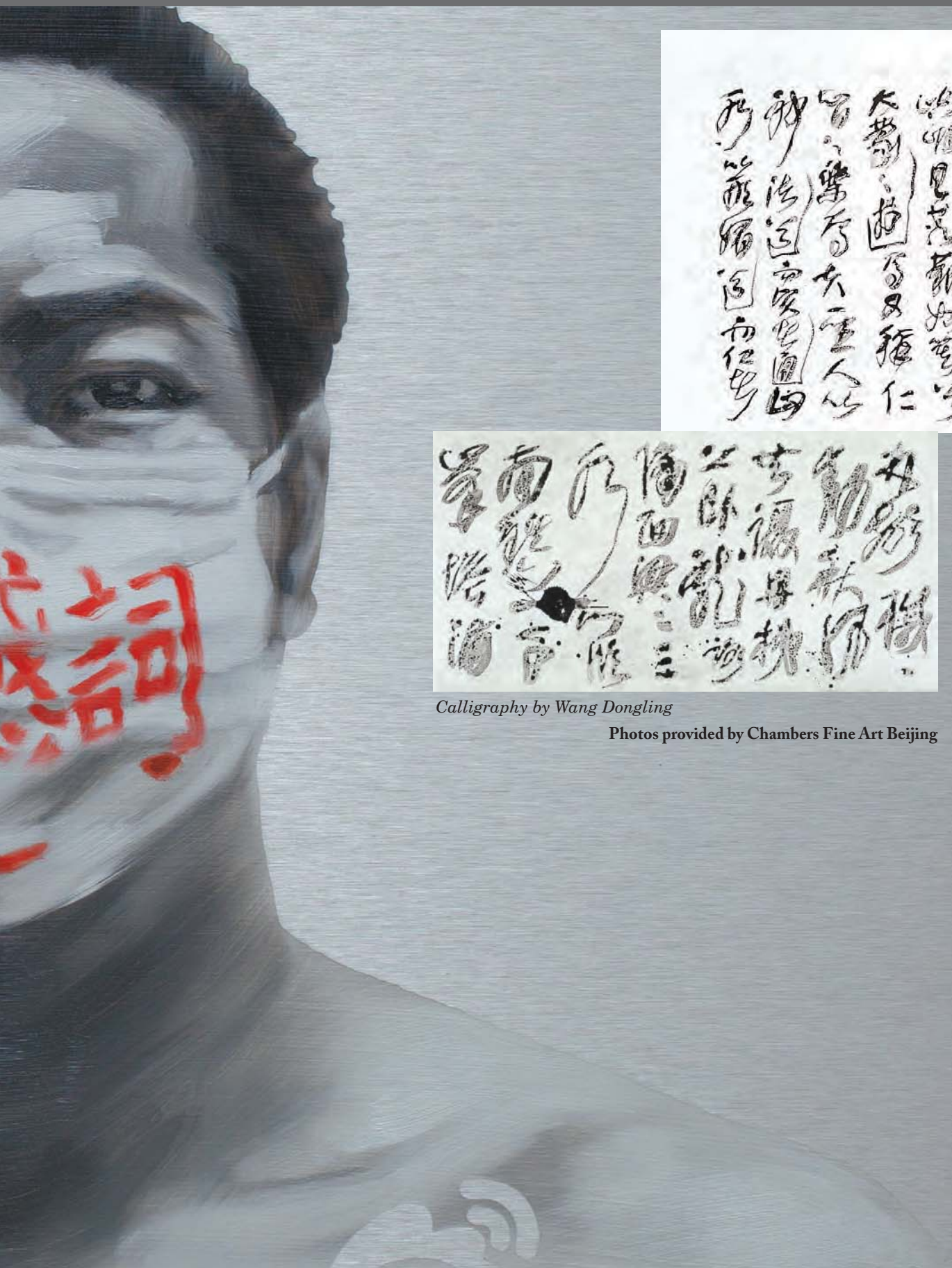
The works of scholar Zheng Shengtian and calligrapher Wang Dongling
Now through September 1

Xiaoze Xie's works draw inspiration from newspapers and Sina Weibo.
Photos provided by Xiaoze Xie

aptured

in search of serious galleries are abandoning 798 Art Zone for Caochangdi.

Beijing Today visited Chambers Fine Art Beijing to learn about two exhibitions of calligraphy and paintings by young Chinese artists and scholars.



Calligraphy by Wang Dongling

Photos provided by Chambers Fine Art Beijing

Reinventing Chinese calligraphy

Traditional Chinese arts like calligraphy and dreamy landscapes created in ink appear to be on their way out.

But scholar and artist Zheng Shengtian (born in 1938) and calligrapher Wang Dongling (1945) are aiming to shake things up by applying traditional aesthetics to modern experimental works.

Their Guan Shan Gathering is an ongoing exhibition that drags traditional Chinese improvisation kicking and screaming into the 2000s.

In ancient times, Chinese intellectuals entertained themselves by collaborating on paintings, poetry and music.

Zheng first experimented with the concept in a 2001 video installation, in which his wife Aikang recreated Clement Greenberg's essay "Modernist Painting" in ink while Canadian artist Hank Bull read it aloud.

In April, Zheng dug up "Preface on Landscape Painting," the seminal work of Eastern Jin scholar Zong Bing (AD 375 to 443), and Wang Dongling rewrote it on five canvases.

The interesting part of Zheng's first video installation and recent creation is that Chinese ink and oil canvas are not compatible. The brush strokes quickly shrink, leaving only a pattern of irregular dots or marks reminiscent of abstract painting.

The exhibition, which ends September 1, includes videos of both creations.

Chambers Fine Art Beijing

Where: Caochangdi Hong 1-D, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am – 6 pm closed on Monday

Tel: 5127 3298

"Multiple Perspectives"

The news and social media inspired art of Xiaoze Xie

September 7 to October 20

Film festival shows fantastic image of Chile



Tierra de Sangre (2013)

Mark and Kathy are on the road to Machu Pichu for a second honeymoon. When they reach Santiago, they find their flight has been postponed.

Kathy persuades her husband to visit a nearby vineyard, where the two meet a young tour guide, Luisa, who tells them the story of the vineyard.

Long ago, a young girl Magdalena married Louis, the French owner of the vineyard. Soon after, Louis' younger brother Etienne ruthlessly seizes control of the vineyard.

Meanwhile, there are rumors of a terrible, blood-sucking monster causing the deaths of nearby villagers. Magdalena suspects there is a connection between Etienne and the monster.

Date: August 01, 2013
August 16, 2013

The Life of Fish (2010)

Andre is a travel writer living an exciting, international life in Berlin. But somehow he is drawn back to Santiago where he catches up with friends he has not

seen in many years. He finds that many of them now live in totally different world, including his love Beatriz. The night might change his life forever.

Date:
August 03, 2013
August 17, 2013

Violeta Went to Heaven (2011)

This film is a portrait of Chilean singer and folklorist Violeta Parra, filled with her musical work, memories and hopes.

Violeta Parra finishes camping and lies down. She begins to see all her dreams, including different life experiences. Uncertain whether she is alive or dead, the film gives insight into her secrets, her terrors, her failures and her happy times.

Date: August 09, 2013
August 23, 2013

The Year of the Tiger (2011)

Manuel is an inmate in a jail in southern Chile. Damage caused by Chile's great earthquake of February 2010 gives him the opportu-

By Zhao Hongyi

Instituto Cervantes is screening four films supplied by the Embassy of Chile this August.

The series introduces Latin America as a mysterious land where settlers can achieve their dreams: a world of beauty and wildness wholly unlike the "old country" – Europe.

Chile is famous for its vineyards, grape wines, natural beauty and more. The former "end of the world" is developing rapidly to become one of the leaders of the century.



nity to escape.

Back home he learns the tsunami killed his wife and daughter. His dreams of life on the outside are shattered and the life of a fugitive causes him to sink into terror and desperation.

Date: August 10, 2013
August 24, 2013

"The films shocked me," said Yu Jian, a junior student of Spanish of the University of International Business and Economy.

Before seeing the films, Yu had been planning to go to Spain like many of his classmates. Now, he has changed mind and wants to move to Latin America, which he says offers the chance to have more interesting experiences and stories.

Instituto Cervantes, opened July 14, 2006, is the top promoter of Spanish language and culture in China. It is also promoting an interest in many Latin American nations.



Many Latin American countries, including Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia, have cooperated with the institute to screen their films.

Screenings are free, but it's a good idea to reserve a seat. Instituto Cervantes' media room only has seating for 90 people.

Instituto Cervantes

Add: A1, Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District, Beijing
Tel: 5879 9666
Admission: Free

Wudaokou shop's home furnishings cheap and unique



1.



2.



3.



4.



The store's facade

By Annie Wei

From the outside one might mistake So Photo for another home decor chain.

However, accessories are not its main inventory: So Photo deals in sturdy, solid wood and art furniture.

Owner Huang Xiqiang left her job at a bank to open the store last year.

"My father likes collecting antiques and I have a thing for vintage goods and delicate home decor," she said.

Unlike many of the small stores that line Beijing's hutong, at least 50 percent of what's sold in So Photo cannot be found anywhere else.

Her suppliers source new items and ship them in a container twice a month. Many are one of a kind: most are affordable.

Huang would prefer to put her store in Sanliun, but high rent has it off limits for the time being.

Wudaokou, while cheaper, mostly limits her clients to IT companies and students. But few students are willing to invest in good furniture, she said.

Most of Huang's accessories are priced less than 300 yuan.

Her store also sells coffee. "I wanted to have a coffee corner where customers could sit, relax and consider how each piece would look in their home."

In addition to furniture and accessories, the shop sells coffee cups, plates and pots. Teapots on the store's second floor start from 138 yuan.

We liked its cabinets, such as a leather-covered solid wood wine cellar for 7,000 yuan. The quality is much higher than similarly priced furniture found on the city's east side.

One can also find discounted items from time to time. On our recent visit, the store installed two new chandeliers. Its old ones, made of iron, were being sold off for 75 yuan each.

So Photo

Where: 13-2, Huaqing Jiayuan, Wudaokou, Haidian District

Open: 10 am – midnight

Tel: 8286 6939



5.



6.



7.



8.

1. Yellow, rough-looking cabinet, 1,100 yuan

2.3.4 Small items priced less than 300 yuan

5. Vintage-looking cabinets start from 3,000 yuan

6. So Photo sells many clocks

7. Hand-painted cabinets, starting from 4,000 yuan

8. Leather wrapped wine cellars, starting from 7,000 yuan

Photos provided by Huang Xiqiang

Discover Kansai food at Ganbei's festival



Chef Sato Takuho from Kobe

Selected beef for the grill



Ganbei is spacious enough for your next gathering.

Photos provided by Ganbei

By Annie Wei

Japanese cuisine is usually divided into two main styles: Kanto and Kansai.

Kansai cuisine is the fresher and sweeter of the two and is known for its use of natural ingredients.

Osaka is the best known city for Kansai cuisine and the home of such popular dishes as takoyaki, okonomiyaki, kitsune udon, kushikatsu and wagyu.

The newly-opened restaurant Ganbei, found on the fourth floor of Kaide Mall by Taiyanggong Station, is introducing Beijing's diners to these specialties and more with a month-long Kansai food festival.

We highly recommend five of

its special Kansai dishes prepared by Executive Chef Sato Takuho from Kobe.

Beijing's food editors have raved about Ganbei's raw beef salad. The short ribs are rich and fatty, mixed with a special house sauce and guaranteed to melt in your mouth.

The shrimp and avocado salad is also fresh and delicious.

Ganbei's ox intestine hotpot consists of stewed intestines and beef, green bean sprouts, cabbage and a slightly spicy broth.

We also liked the stewed Kansai cow strips with tofu and Korean kimchi. The thick-sliced salt-marinated veal was equally tempting.

During the Kansai food festival, the restaurant is offering a free raw beef salad. Tables that spend more than 500 yuan can get free marinated veal.

Ganbei also has a wide selection of imported Japanese beverages and beer.

The mall provides a convenient parking lot, and Ganbei's interior is spacious enough to seat 200. It's a great place for your next gathering.

Ganbei Restaurant

Where: 04-36, Kaide Mall, 12 Taiyanggong Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 11 pm

Tel: 8415 0797

Buffet becomes fine dining experience



Greek salad

Photos by A.A

By Annie Wei

Buffets may be popular with casual diners, but pleasing a food critic is tough: most buffets offer too many options and too few that stand out.

If your friends and family are in the mood for a Sunday buffet brunch, we recommend the Hilton Beijing Wangfujing.

Its restaurant allows you to choose as much as you want – even some dishes from the Hilton's special Mediterranean menu.

Start with a traditional Greek salad. More and more local restaurants are serving salads, but few do them right.

A salad requires more thought than throwing together a bunch of greens. The mixture of ingredients, season of the vegetables and natural flavors must all be balanced. Also, the onions should be sliced thin and soaked in ice water to remove their tart taste.

The Hilton's salads are some of the best in town.

The bouillabaisse is also highly recommended. According to tradition, there should be at least five different kinds of fish for a proper bouillabaisse.

Chef Toby Wang's bouillabaisse stands out with its strong and creamy soup. The trick, he said, is to stew the fish and shellfishes long enough, and then add cameral citrus and Chinese parsley to enhance the flavor.

"Do not add the citrus first or it creates a bitter flavor," Wang said. Mussels and squid taste the best.



Moroccan lamb tagine

Moroccan lamb tagine is one of the restaurant's most popular dishes: it's rare to find in the capital.

Tagines are popular dishes in North Africa where water is scarce. The domed or cone-shaped lid of the tagine traps steam and returns the condensed liquid to the pot. The dish requires minimal water and retains as much flavor as possible.

We also liked its macadamia cheesecake with mixed berry compote, which went well with a house white wine.

The brunch costs 368 yuan per person or 458 yuan, plus 15 percent subcharge with unlimited champagne.

Vasco's

Where: 5F, Hilton Beijing Wangfujing

When: 11:30 am – 3 pm Sunday, till September 30

Tel: 5812 8888